

# Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States

COMMANDERY OF THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA

## In Memoriam

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JAMES ADDAMS BEAVER

*Brevet Brig.-General U. S. Volunteers*

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DIED AT BELLEFONTE PA. JANUARY 31 1914

# Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States

HEADQUARTERS COMMANDERY OF THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA

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Philadelphia, August 20, 1914.

## JAMES ADDAMS BEAVER.

First Lieutenant 2d Pennsylvania Infantry April 21, 1861; honorably mustered out July 22, 1861.

Lieut.-Colonel 45th Pennsylvania Infantry October 21, 1861; discharged for promotion September 4, 1862.

Colonel 148th Pennsylvania Infantry September 8, 1862; honorably discharged for disability from wounds received in battle December 22, 1864.

Brevetted Brig.-General U. S. Volunteers August 1, 1864, "for highly meritorious and distinguished conduct throughout the campaign, particularly for valuable services at Cold Harbor while commanding a brigade."

Elected October 20, 1886. Class 1. Insignia 4940.

Junior Vice-Commander of the Commandery May 7, 1890-1891.

Commander May 2, 1906-1907.

Born October 21, 1837, at Millerstown, Pa.

Died January 31, 1914, at Bellefonte, Pa.

Companion Beaver was the third child and first son of Jacob and Ann Eliza Beaver. His progenitors, all of Central Penna., all rearing large families, the common ancestor of German birth, from early Colonial times were men of prominence, conspicuous in the wars as patriots, distinguished in the field as soldiers, leaders in business, farmers and merchants, helpful in the church, valued for their worth, honored for their virtues.

His academic course completed, Companion Beaver matriculated as a junior in what was then Jefferson College, of Cannonsburg, and is now Washington and Jefferson College, of Washington, Penna.; graduating with honor in the class of 1856, before he had attained his nineteenth year. The degree he then received was supplemented in his later life by others conferred by Dickinson College of Penna., the University of Edinburgh, and other institutions of learning. This class of '56 was number fifty-six, and of its membership fifty-one adopted a professional calling; twenty-four entered the ministry; seventeen chose the law; three selected medicine, and seven became teachers. Twenty-two saw service in the field in the War of the Rebellion.

Companion Beaver, after his graduation, located at Bellefonte, entered the office of the Hon. H. N. McAllister, was admitted to the Bar, when barely of age, became his preceptor's law partner, and was well on his way to an established practice when the call to arms summoned him to the field. While



yet a student, his soldier instincts had materialized by his enlistment on July 10, 1858, as a private in Captain Andrew G. Curtin's Co., the Bellefonte Fencibles. Made a sergeant in October of the same year, his advancement to the second lieutenancy followed on September 3, 1860. This company was mustered into the service of the United States April 20, 1861, as Co. H, 2nd Penna. Infantry, with John B. Mitchell as Captain and James A. Beaver as First Lieutenant. Andrew G. Curtin, the first of the three, Beaver and Hastings to follow, as Bellefonte's contribution to that exalted office, was the Governor of the State.

Whatever there was for Companion Beaver to do, he did thoroughly, neither doubt nor anxiety hindered its inception, intelligent comprehension attended its performance, incessant activity hastened its accomplishment. These well defined characteristics, apparent from his earliest manhood, received their more substantial definition as his responsibilities enlarged; his military career brought them into distinctive significance. While yet a subaltern with a full recognition of the gravity of the crisis and the magnitude of the undertaking, he seemed to forecast with something of a prophetic vision what with its successful outcome would be the strength and prestige of the Nation. While with General Patterson's column in the Shenandoah Valley, to which the 2nd Penna. had been assigned, engaged in its ineffectual campaign, he wrote his mother:

"The only real result of this Rebellion will be to establish this government upon a foundation which cannot be moved by the too violent uprisings of factious and designing demagogues, and in this view of it I doubt not this movement on the part of the South will demonstrate itself the most important and fortunate in its results which could possibly have happened. The government will have proved itself selfsustaining."

The 2nd Penna. was mustered out of the service and the 45th Penna. organized, equipped and in the field, with Companion Beaver as Lieut.-Colonel, still of subordinate rank, was designated for employment that brought his individual responsibilities into constant activity. The 45th was for several months engaged upon the Sea Islands before Charleston, where Lieut.-Colonel Beaver for the most part held an independent command, "frequently meeting the enemy by day and by night in hostile encounter," and when further promotion came, and a regiment was to be his in the making his "thoroughness" had passed out of the realm of conjecture and opinion and became an accepted and historic fact. Such was apparently the conclusion of General Francis A. Walker, as well the Assistant Adjutant-General of the Corps as a recognized scholar and well accredited author. In his History of the Second Army Corps, referring to the heavy loss the Corps had sustained at Fredericksburg, he says: "Three days after the First Division had returned to camp, it as the most depleted division, received a reinforcement in the One Hundred and forty-eighth Pennsylvania, Colonel James A. Beaver, a regiment which was thereafter through all the terrible struggles to the glorious end to be associated with the Second Army Corps, and never to be named without honor. The degree of discipline through which the new regiment of Western Pennsylvania troops had already in four months of service been brought by its Commander, rendered it at once a conspicuous figure, whether among the camps, on review, on in the field," and as if in apparent illustration of what he had said in reference to appearance on review, the author in describing a review of the Second

Army Corps by General Grant in April, 1864, says, "The appearance and bearing of the troops was brilliant in the extreme, but among all the gallant regiments which passed the reviewing officer, two excited especial admiration, the 148th Penna., Colonel James A. Beaver, and the 40th New York, Colonel Egan."

"Discipline" in one of its phases has been defined to be "a quantity measured by the endurance of loss under fire." With the "degree of discipline" with which General Walker has accredited the 148th Penna. may well be read what he says of its conduct in that desperately disastrous assault on the third day at Cold Harbor, "Colonel Beaver's 148th Penna. being conspicuous for its soldierly bearing fell back to a slight crest opposite the enemy's entrenchments, and distant only thirty to seventy-five yards therefrom \* \* \* here at a little more than pistol range, they remained throughout the day." In commenting on a Corps Headquarters Order that had assigned Colonel Beaver to the command of a Brigade, General Walker adds that he was "An officer whose sterling worth had grown steadily in the appreciation of troops and commanders alike."

Companion Beaver was several times seriously, indeed desperately, wounded. The scenes and battle incidents attendant upon the last occasion, which involved a permanent disability, have been thus graphically described: "He chanced to reach the field just as his division was preparing to go into battle at Reams Station, and at once assumed command of his brigade. The fighting here was of unparalleled severity. Round shot and shell ploughed the field; assault followed assault without decided advantage, and neither party was disposed to yield. In their desperation, the combatants came hand to hand, and the crossing of bayonets and deadly thrusts were of frequent occurrence. In the midst of this terrible strife, as though some demon was its guide, he was again struck by the fatal missile and so shattered was his right limb, that amputation above the knee was resorted to. Possessed of temperate habits, he was able to withstand the shock, and soon recovered his accustomed health and vitality."

The 148th stands number fourteen in the list of the twenty-three regiments that lost fifteen per cent. and upwards of the maximum percentage of enrollment, killed in action, or died of wounds received there. Its loss was 15.6, a total of 210. Its heaviest losses were at Chancellorsville 48, Gettysburg 31, Po River 37, and Spotsylvania 29. Of the two latter engagements, Brig.-General John R. Brooke, the Brigade Commander, spoke officially as follows: "Colonel James A. Beaver distinguished himself on every occasion, but most particularly at the battle of the Po, May 10th, and Spotsylvania, May 12th."

Companion Beaver's service in the National Guard of Pennsylvania covered a period of twenty-four years, three years in the ranks and as a lieutenant from 1858 to 1861, seventeen years as a general officer in command of a division and brigade from 1870 to 1887, and four years as Governor and Commander-in-Chief from 1887 to 1891.

The return of Companion Beaver to the pursuit of his profession, with his ripened experiences, brought him again in touch with the political, economic and social forces of the state and nation, while in the process of their speedy readjustment from the disturbances the war had produced. The state from time to time felt the full persuasive and forceful power of his uplift, influence and energy; his county knew his worth. These were the opportunities of



lesser moment that developed his usefulness. He was one of the Commission that supervised and built the Insane Asylum at Warren, Pa., an institution where was made operative the more advanced methods for the housing and treatment of the insane. He was a Trustee, President of the Board of Trustees, of the Pennsylvania State College of Centre Co. He had devoted the zeal and purpose of a lifetime to what proved to be its ultimate success. Washington and Jefferson College, and Lincoln University at Oxford, Pa., are also numbered among his trusteeships.

A manifest adaptability for his profession, an intense love for the law, the successful results of an ever increasing practice, the growing confidence of court and client for years, persuaded a determined resistance to the persistent efforts, that ultimately however forced a reluctant acceptance of the Republican nomination for the State Legislature, which though ineffectual, brought the majority of the opposition in his county from its normal standard of eight or nine hundred down to one hundred and forty-one.

A re-infusion of military ardor into the political arena, in the proposed re-nomination of General Grant as a candidate for the Presidency at the Chicago Convention of 1880, found Companion Beaver there as the Chairman of the Pennsylvania delegation. His fairness and impartiality between the contending factions had so won the favor of his colleagues, that the lengthy contest over, he was made their unanimous choice for the Vice-Presidency. Other delegations tendered their support, his neat speech seconding the nomination of General Garfield, gave a zest to the proposition, and his nomination, save for his avowed determination to decline it, seemed an accepted probability. His reply that "he had no wish for public favor, except such as would come to him from his own state, and there his party friends desiring him to be a candidate for Governor, he should respect their wishes," brought in the end a responsive answer, when subsequently, by a decisive majority, he was elected to that office; followed as it was a few years after the expiration of his term by his election to the Appellate Judiciary as a Judge of the Superior Court, a judgeship which he held until near the end of his second ten years' term. He was still on the bench at the time of his decease.

A spirited and determined advocate, a wise and upright judge, an executive of acumen, discernment and discrimination, bold and aggressive, persuasive and patient, forceful and insistent, thoughtful and deliberate, were of his characteristic qualifications that so especially amplified the fitness of Companion Beaver to be the ruler of a people. His force on the platform was measurably increased by the ready way in which he made easy acquaintance with his audience. His sincerity induced conviction, his earnestness assured a purpose, his energy forced attention. Off-hand or prepared, there was never a straining for effect, never a seeking for applause; so too, with his every action, wherever he was, whatever he did, his sole aim seemed to be as he had once so subscribed himself, "Yours for service," with never a thought of gain or reward; never a purpose for advantage or preferment. The Church claimed him for her own, a leader among her laymen, faithful, diligent, constant, zealous, he had been chosen for high place in her councils. A Commissioner to the General Assembly, a Vice Moderator of that august body, he was also a delegate to the World's Missionary Conference at Edinburgh, where his speech and influence soon won for him the prominent place in its deliberations to which his usefulness entitled him.

On December 26, 1865, Companion Beaver was married to Miss Mary McAllister, a daughter of his law partner. His widow and two sons survive him.

JAMES W. LATTA,

Brevet Lieut.-Colonel U. S. Volunteers.

D. McMURTRIE GREGG,

Brevet Major-General U. S. Volunteers.

CHARLES C. NORRIS,

Captain 132d Penna. Infantry.

*Committee.*

By command of

Colonel HENRY S. HUIDEKOPER, U. S. V.  
Commander

JOHN P. NICHOLSON

Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel U. S. V.

*Recorder*

*Official*

*Recorder*